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A New Psychology for Sustainability Leadership

New book shows how psychology and ecological worldviews can transform sustainability leadership in business and higher education.

(ASHLAND, OR — July 8, 2015) Sustainability Response to climate change. Possibly the most important current business topics facing our world today. While many corporations and leaders “talk” about their role in solving environmental challenges, their actions don’t always reflect the important task at hand. Up until now, it has been generally assumed that all multinational corporations, and by default all executives inside them, have the same worldview. Fortunately, there are a number of senior executives inside some of the worlds largest companies committed to advancing sustainability beyond its current limitations and conflicts.

In his important new book, **A New Psychology for Sustainability Leadership** (Greenleaf, July 31, 2015) author Steve Schein presents a compelling picture of how highly influential global sustainability leaders are motivated by their own *ecological worldviews*, which have been formed from specific life experiences. Using insights from the field of developmental psychology, Schein shows how sustainability executives also express a concept known as *post-conventional worldviews*, which expand the ways they communicate to overcome resistance and deal with the complexity of environmental and social challenges.

Schein explains how sustainability is transforming companies and the way they conduct business. “Using a process known as biomimicry, engineers are designing new products based on a more thorough understanding of how nature works. Using a tool known as life-cycle analysis, accountants are measuring the full environmental footprint of products, from resource extraction through the manufacturing supply chain, distribution, disposal, and recovery. Large-scale collaborative efforts between multinational companies, environmental non-profits, and governments are leading to new systemic approaches to our most complex global environmental problems involving the oceans, farmlands, forests, river basins, and our fellow species.”

Drawing on interviews with 75 leaders in more than 40 multinational organizations and NGOs, **A New Psychology for Sustainability Leadership** is the first book that shows how an understanding of worldviews can greatly enhance the field of sustainability leadership. The author draws on several cutting-edge social science disciplines that up until now have not been applied to sustainability leadership in business, education, or public policy. These include developmental psychology, eco-psychology, integral ecology, and deep ecology.

Through a new self-assessment and thought-provoking questions, the book helps readers apply worldview concepts to their own careers in the sustainability field. Schein encourages personal reflections on their deeper motivations for careers in sustainability and inspires greater resiliency to face challenges over the long-term. By shining the light on psychological dimensions of sustainability executives in multinational corporations, the book can lead to new types of conversations and research across a wide range of social science, environmental, and business disciplines.

By empirically grounding key theories from developmental psychology in sustainability leadership practice, the author encourages us to think about leadership in a different way – one that will not only influence the bottom line, but also the betterment of the world around them.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Steve Schein has over 30 years of leadership experience as a CEO and co-founder of a NYSE company and senior executive with Nabisco and Ernst & Young. He is a pioneer in sustainability leadership, teaching and research. As a member of the faculty at the School of Business at Southern Oregon University from 2005-2015, he founded one of the first sustainability leadership programs in an undergraduate business school in the United States.

Dr. Schein's research focuses on the development of ecological and post-conventional worldviews in the setting of multinational corporate leadership and has been published in *The Journal of Corporate Citizenship* and *The Journal of Management of Global Sustainability*. He has presented at numerous conferences on corporate social and environmental responsibility and currently serves on the Board of Directors for Net Impact (<https://netimpact.org>) and the GEOS Institute (<http://www.geosinstitute.org>). He is a CPA and holds a PhD in Human Development and Organizational Systems.

A New Psychology for Sustainability Leadership: The Hidden Power of Ecological Worldviews, by Steve Schein

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